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DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY
SPOKANE REGIONAL OFFICE

Route 2, Box 7
Colville, Washington 99114
February 18, 1982

March 10, 1982

Mr. Jeff Stern
Route 2, Box 407
Colville, WA 99114

Subject: Van Stone Mine, Stevens County

Dear Mr. Stern:

Thank you for your letter of February 18, 1982, regarding the former Van Stone Mine on Onion Creek, Stevens County.

This office is quite aware of these tailings impoundments. These ponds, as with others around the state, constitute an unique situation. They were created years ago by a former owner, which no longer exists as a legal entity. When created, today's Environmental Protection Laws did not exist.

The current owner recognizes certain, though limited, responsibilities. They have conducted a program to revegetate the ponds to stabilize the surface and minimize erosion. Certain other measures to reduce erosion have been put into place and maintained. We believe that the situation has been controlled to the extent possible under the law. A State Waste Discharge Permit has been issued pursuant to RCW 90.48, the State Water Pollution Control Act. Copies of the cover page and Special Conditions are enclosed.

To my knowledge, no monitoring data is available. With our restricted budgets now in place, I don't expect the department will collect any data on Onion Creek in the near future. For your reference, a copy of the State Water Quality Standards are enclosed. Onion Creek, a tributary of the Columbia River, would be classified as Class AA.

We appreciate your concern. This response probably will not be totally to your satisfaction. However, we believe that within the statutory provision of "all known, reasonable and available methods", the situation is being controlled as well as it can be.

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Sincerely,

Roger K. Ray
District Supervisor
Environmental Quality Division

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Enclosures

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